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FAVOURITE SONGS
OF THE PEOPLE









A FRIEND IN NEED,

AND

Other Stories.







THE DISOBEDIENT BOY
page 47



A FRIEND IN NEED

AND

OTHER STORIES

BY

ALOE

T. NELSON AND SONS.
LONDON, EDINBURGH AND NEW YORK.





A FRIEND IN NEED,

AND

Other Stories.

BY

A. L. O. E.,

AUTHOR OF "THE SILVER CASKET," "CROWN OF SUCCESS,"
ETC., ETC



LONDON:

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A FRIEND IN NEED.

"Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not."

PROV. xxvii. 10.

THERE was not a happier mother in the village than Mrs. Peters, nor a better son than her Robin. She had trained up her child in the way he should go, and it was now his delight to walk in it; she had not shrunk from correcting his faults, and he loved her the better for the correction; she had taught him from the Bible his duty towards his God, and from the same pages he had learned his duty towards his mother. It was a pleasant sight on the Sabbath morn-

ing, to see them walking up the little pathway which led to the church—the feeble parent leaning on the strong, healthy son, who carried her Bible and prayer-book for her. Mrs. Peters never had the slightest feeling of envy towards those who appeared above her in the world—she would not have changed places with any one. “They may have riches, fine houses, broad lands,” she would say; “but who has a son like mine?”

On the Sunday afternoon, however, Robin did not accompany his mother to church. Perhaps you may suppose that, after his hard work all the week, he thought that he needed a little rest or amusement; that you might have found him at “the idle corner” of the village, joining in the sports of younger companions; and that he considered, like too many, alas! that having given the Sabbath morning to religion, he might do what he pleased with the rest of the day. Let us follow Robin Peters in his Sunday




GOING TO CHURCH.

pursuits, and see where, after partaking of dinner with his mother, he bends his willing steps.

Over the common, through the wood, up the steep hill-side ! It matters not to him that the way is long ; that in winter part of the road scarcely deserves the name of one at all, being almost impassable from slough and snow. Cheerfully he hastens along, with a light springing step ; sometimes shortening the way with a hymn, or gazing around on the endless variety of nature, and lifting up his heart to nature's God ! There is surely something very pleasant that awaits Robin Peters at the end of his walk, that he always should take it in this one direction—should never give it up, fair weather or foul, and look so happy while pursuing his way !

He stops at last at the door of a poor little hovel, built partly of mud, and thatched with straw. The broken panes in the single window have been patched with paper by Robin's hand, instead of being, as formerly, stuffed up with rags ; but either way they speak of poverty and want. By the miser-



able little fire—which could scarcely be kept up at all, but for the sticks which Robin has supplied—sits a poor old man, almost bent double by time, the long hair falling on his wrinkled brow, his hand trembling, his eye



OLD AYLMER.

dim with age. But there is a kindling pleasure even in that dim eye, as he hears a well-known rap at the door ; and warm is the press of that thin, trembling hand, as it returns the kindly grasp of Robin !

First there are inquiries for the old man's health, and these take some time to answer; for it is a relief to the suffering to pour out long complaints—it is a comfort to them if one kindly ear will listen with interest and patience. Then the contents of Robin's pockets are emptied upon the broken deal box, which serves at once as chest of drawers and table to the old man, and a seat to the visitors, "few and far between," who find their way to the hovel on the hill. The present brought by the youth varies from week to week. He has little to give, but he always brings something to eke out old Will Aylmer's parish allowance: sometimes it is a little tea from his mother; perhaps a pair of warm socks, knitted by herself; or a part of his own dinner, if he has nothing else to bring to the poor and aged friend of his father.

After the depths of the pockets had been duly explored, Robin, seated on the box, very close to the old man—for Aylmer was

extremely hard of hearing—repeated to him, in a loud tone of voice, as much of the morning's sermon as he could remember. He whom age and infirmities kept from the house of God, thus, from the kindness of a youth, every week received some portion of spiritual food. But most did he enjoy when Robin opened the Bible—for, poor as Aylmer was, he was provided with that—and in the same loud, distinct voice read the blessed words which the dim eyes of his friend could no longer see.

After the Holy Book was closed, it was long before Robin found that he was able to depart, Aylmer liked so much to hear all about his friends and his neighbours—everything which passed in the village in which the old man had once lived. It was something for him to think over during the long, lonely week, to prevent his feeling himself quite shut out from the living world. And Robin had not only to speak, but to listen ; and this, notwithstanding the deafness of old

Aylmer, was perhaps the harder task of the two. Not only the poor man's sight, but his memory also was failing; his mind was growing weak and childish with age; and his tedious and oft-repeated tales would have wearied out any patience that was not grounded on Christian love. And so the afternoon of the Sabbath passed with Robin Peters, and he returned weary but happy to his home, to enjoy a quiet holy evening with his mother. He had poured sweetness into a bitter cup; he had followed the footsteps of his compassionate Lord; and he had obeyed the precept given in the Scriptures, *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.*

After what has been written, it is scarcely necessary to add that the life of Robin was a happy one. At peace with God, and at peace with man, earning his bread by honest industry, in debt to none, in enmity with none, blessed with friends, cheerful spirits, and excellent health, he was far happier

than many who wear a crown. But though religion can support the Lord's people under trials, it does not prevent their having to undergo them like others ; and after several years had been spent in comfort and peace, a cloud was gathering over the home of Robin.

One Saturday evening he returned from his work complaining of headache and a pain in his throat. Mrs. Peters concluded that he had taken a chill, and, advising him to go early to rest, prepared for him some simple remedy, which she trusted would "set all to rights." Robin took what she gave him with thanks, but he seemed strangely silent that evening, and sat with his brow resting upon his hand, as though oppressed by a weight in his head. The fond mother grew anxious ;—who can help being so whose earthly happiness rests upon *one*? She felt her son's hand feverish and hot ; she was alarmed by the burning flush on his cheek, and proposed begging the

doctor to call. At first Robin objected to this: he had hardly ever known sickness in his life. The medical man lived at some distance, and the night was closing in. In the maladies of the body—but oh! how much more in those of the soul!—how foolish and dangerous a thing is delay!

Another hour passed, and the fever and pain of the sufferer appeared to increase. Again the mother anxiously proposed to send for the doctor; and this time Robin made no opposition. “Perhaps it might be as well,” he faintly said. “I did not like making you uneasy by saying it before, but there has been a case of scarlet fever up at the farm.”

The words struck like a knife into the mother’s heart! There was not another moment of delay; she hastily ran out to the door of a neighbour, and easily found a friend—for it was often remarked that Mrs. Peters and her son never wanted friends—who would hasten off for the medical man.

Robin in the meantime retired to his bed, feeling unable to sit up longer. The symptoms of his disorder soon became more alarming—a scarlet glow spread over his frame, his pulse beat high, his temples throbbed; and his mother, in an agony of fear which she could only calm by prayer, sat watching for the arrival of the doctor.

Dr. Merton had just sat down to a very late dinner with two old school-fellows of his, whom he had not met for years; and they promised themselves a very pleasant evening together. “Nothing like old friendships, and old friends!” he said gaily, as the covers were removed from the steaming dishes, and they saw before them a comfortable repast, which the late hour and a twenty miles’ ride had given all a hearty appetite to enjoy. “Nothing like old friends, old stories, old recollections!—we shall seem to live our school-days over again, and feel ourselves boys once more.”

There was a ring at the door-bell, a very

loud ring—there was impatience and haste in the sound of it. “I hope that’s nothing to disturb our sociable evening,” said Dr. Merton, who, having filled the plates of both his friends, was just placing a slice of roast-beef on his own. He paused, with the carving knife and fork still in his hand, as his servant entered the room.

“Please, sir, here’s Tom Grange come in haste from Redburn, and he says that Robin Peters is taken very ill, and his mother begs to see you directly.”

The knife and fork were laid down, perhaps a little unwillingly, and the doctor arose from his chair.

“Why, Merton, you’re not going now!” cried one of his companions.

“Just wait till after dinner,” said the other.

“Excuse me; Mrs. Peters is not the woman to send me such a message without sufficient cause. I have known her, and her son too, for many a long year, and

they shall not find me fail them in their trouble."

So the doctor put on his greatcoat, took down his hat, begged his friends to do justice to the good cheer provided, and left them, if I must own it, with no small regret, to sally forth in that cold, wintry night, tired and hungry as he was. He walked fast, both to save time and to keep himself warm; but his pace would have been even more rapid had he known the agonizing anxiety, increasing every minute, with which his arrival was expected. The door, as he reached it, was opened by the widow, who looked upon him with the breathless earnestness of one who expects to hear a sentence of life or death.

A very short examination of the sufferer enabled the doctor to pronounce that his case was one of decided scarlet fever. Some one must sit up with him and watch him that night; a messenger should instantly be sent with the remedies required; the

doctor would himself call the first thing the next morning.

"You do not think my boy—*very* ill, sir?" faltered the mother, folding her hands and fixing her eyes upon Dr. Merton with an expression of much grief, which touched the kind man to the heart.

"He is ill, I cannot deny that; but keep a good heart, he has youth and a fine constitution in his favour; and I need not remind you, my friend, to apply for help to Him in whose hands are the issues of life and of death."

Oh, how often that night, that long, fearful night, did prayer arise from the widow's low-roofed cottage! It seemed as though the darkness would never be past. At the end of every weary hour the night-breeze brought the sound of the church-clock to the watcher's ear, while the stars still trembled in the sky. The wick of the candle burned long and low, the last spark in the grate had died out, and there lay the sufferer, so helpless, so still,

that it seemed as though his soul were in like manner silently, surely passing from its dwelling of clay.

But with the return of morning's light the fever rose, and the malady took its more terrible form. Robin knew nothing of what was passing around him,—even his much-loved mother he recognized no more; his mind became full of strange wild fancies, the delirious dreams of fever. His mother listened in anguish to his ravings; but a deeper grief was spared her—even when reason no longer guided his lips, those lips uttered not a word that could raise a blush on the cheek of his mother. Robin's conversation had been pure in the days of his health—he had kept his mouth as with a bridle; and the habit of a life was seen even now when he lay at the gates of death! His mother heard his unconscious prayers—words from Scripture instinctively spoken; and while her hot tears gushed more freely forth, she was thankful fr

the depths of her soul. There was no death-bed repentance here for a life devoted to sin; Robin had not left the work of faith and love for the dregs of age or the languor of a sick-bed. She felt that if Heaven were pleased to take him from her now, *he was safe*, safe in the care of One who loved him better than even she did; though consciousness might never return to him, though he might never again breathe on earth one connected prayer, *he was safe*, in time and in eternity, through the merits of the Saviour whom he had loved.

"Oh, sir, I am so thankful to see you!" exclaimed Mrs. Peters, as, pale and worn with watching, she received the doctor at an early hour of the morning. "My poor boy is very feverish and restless indeed—he does not know me!"—the tears rolled down her cheek as she spoke; "I am scarcely able to make him keep in his bed."

"You must have assistance," said Dr. Merton, walking up to his patient. Words

broke from Robin's lips as he approached him—words rather gasped forth than spoken: "I must go—he expects me; indeed, I must go—my own friend and my father's friend." He made an effort to rise, but sank back exhausted on the pillow.

"There is something on his mind," observed the doctor.

"It is that he is accustomed to visit a poor old friend, Will Aylmer, who lives in the hovel on the hill."

"Will Aylmer!" repeated the doctor, as though the name were familiar to him. And well might it be so, for the feeble old man had in years long past served as gardener to his father; and many a time had the little Merton received flowers from his hand, or been carried in his arms, which then were sturdy and strong.

Dr. Merton now examined his patient, and the poor mother read from the doctor's looks rather than from his words that he entertained little hope of her son's recovery.

As he quitted that home of sorrow, Dr. Merton sighed from mingling feelings.

“ I fear that poor Robin is near his last home,” thought he ; “ and yet, why should I *fear*, since I believe that for him it will be but an earlier enjoyment of bliss ? He has shamed me, that poor peasant boy ! Even in his delirium he is thinking of another ; he is struggling to rise from the bed of death to go on his wonted visit of kindness to his own and his father’s friend ; and I, blessed with means so much larger than his, have for thirty long years neglected, nay, forgotten, the old faithful servant of my family ! I shall look upon poor Will Aylmer as a legacy from Robin. He has done what he could for his friend during life ; and by his dying words,—if it please God that he should die,—he shall have done yet more for the old man.”

For three days Robin continued in an alarming state, and his mother never closed an eye in sleep. Love and fear seemed to

give her weak frame strength to support any amount of fatigue ; or, as she said, it was the goodness of the Almighty that held her up through her bitter trial. On the fourth morning Robin sank into a deep sleep. She gazed on his features, pale and death-like as they were ; for the red flush of fever had all passed away, and he lay motionless, silent, but with that peaceful look which often remains when the spirit has departed. A terrible doubt flashed upon the mother's mind—a doubt whether all were not over ! She approaches her son with a step noiseless as the dew, the light feather of a bird in her hand. She holds it near to his lips,—his breath has moved it !—no, that was but the trembling of her fingers ! She lays it on the pillow, her heart throbbing fast ;—is that the morning breeze that so lightly stirs the down ? No ; thank God, he still breathes !—he still lives !

Mrs. Peters sank upon her knees, buried

her face in her hands, and once more implored Him who had compassion on the desolate widow of Nain to save her beloved son; "But, O Lord," she added, with an almost bursting heart, "if it be Thy will to remove him to a happier world, give me grace not to murmur beneath the rod, but to say humbly, 'Thy will be done.'"

As she rose from her knees she turned her eyes towards her son, and they met his, calmly, lovingly fixed upon her, with an expression, oh! how different from that which they had worn during the feverish excitement of delirium! "You were praying for me," he said, very faintly; "and the Lord has answered your prayer." The deep joy of that moment would have overpowered the mother, had it not been tempered by a fear that this improvement might be but as the last flash of a dying lamp, and that the danger was not yet over.

But from that hour Robin's recovery

rapidly progressed, and the fever never returned. He was weak, indeed, for many a long day; his vigorous arm had lost all its powers; he had to be fed and supported like a child. But it was a delight to Mrs. Peters to do everything for him, and to watch his gradual improvement in strength. Nor, poor as she was, did she ever know want while her son was unable to work. All the neighbourhood seemed pleased to do something for Robin—to help him who had been so ready to help others. The squire's lady sent wine and meat from her own table; the clergyman's wife brought him strong broth; the farmer, his master, supplied him with bacon and eggs; and many a neighbour who had little to give, yet joyfully gave of that little.

“How good every one is to me!” exclaimed Robin, as a parcel from the grocer's was opened before him on the first day that he was able to quit his bed. “I only wish that I could send some of this to Will Ayl-

mer ; I am afraid that he has missed me while I was ill."

"Oh, he has been looked after," replied Mrs. Peters with a smile : her care-worn face was becoming quite bright again.

"Who has taken care of him ?" inquired Robin.

"I must not tell you, my son ; you are to hear all from the old man's own lips."

"I'm afraid that it will be very long before I am strong enough to visit him. How glad I shall be to see him again !"

Two or three days after this, a bright warm sun tempted the invalid to take advantage of the doctor's permission, and try a little walk in the open air. Leaning on the arm of his thankful, happy mother, Robin again crossed that threshold which it once seemed so likely that he would only pass in his coffin. It was a sweet morning in the early spring, and, oh ! how delightful to him who had been confined on the couch

of fever was the sunshine that lighted up the face of nature, the sight of the woods with their light mantle of green, the blue sky dappled with fleecy clouds; even the crocus and the snowdrop in his mother's little garden seemed to speak of joy and hope; and pleasant was the feeling of the balmy breeze that played upon his pale, sunken cheek.

“The common air, the earth, the skies,
To him were opening paradise!”


Robin lifted up his heart in silent thanksgiving, and in prayer that the life which the Almighty had preserved might be always devoted to His service.

“Do you feel strong enough, my son, to walk as far as that cottage yonder?” inquired Mrs. Peters.

“I think that, with your arm, I might reach even the tree beyond.”

“Then suppose that we pay a visit to old Aylmer.”

Robin laughed aloud at the idea. “Why,



my dear mother, neither you nor I have strength to go one quarter of the distance. I fear that I must delay that visit for some time to come."

"There is nothing like trying," replied Mrs. Peters gaily; and they proceeded a little way together.

"Is it not strange?—I am weary already," said the youth.

"Then we will rest in this cottage for a little."

"It was empty before my illness; if there is any one in it now, a patient just recovered from the scarlet fever might not be made very welcome."

"Oh, you will be made welcome here, I can answer for that," cried Mrs. Peters; and at that moment who should come tottering from the door, joy overspreading his aged face, his eyes glistening with tears of pleasure and affection, but Robin's poor old friend. He grasped the youth's hand in both his own, and blessed God fervently for

letting him see the face of his "dear boy" once more.

"But how is this?" exclaimed Robin, with joyful surprise.

The deaf man rather read the question in Robin's eyes than caught the sense of it from words which he scarcely could hear. "Dr. Merton—bless him!—has brought me here, and has promised to care for the poor old man: and he bade me tell you,"—Aylmer paused, and pressed his hand upon his wrinkled forehead, for his powers of memory were almost gone—"he bade me tell you that these comforts I owed to you. I can't recollect all that he said, but I know very well that he ended with the words,—'*Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.*'"





The Great Plague.

“Fools make a mock at sin.”—PROV. xiv. 9.

WHAT a violent storm is raging !” said Thorn, the teacher, to his scholars, as, after having dismissed them at the close of the school hours, he found them clustering together in the porch, afraid of venturing forth into the pelting rain, pouring down in large, heavy drops, mingled with hail, which danced on the wet brown pavement. “Come back into the room, my children ; it is better than standing there in the cold. Amuse yourselves as you like until

the weather clears up, while I occupy myself with reading."

The boys gladly availed themselves of the permission, and began to play together in one part of the room; while the weary teacher sat down in another, rested his pale brow on his hand, and tried, as far as the noise and talking would let him, to forget his fatigue in a book.

He soon, however, found it impossible not to hear what was passing; his eye rested, indeed, on the page, but his mind could not take in the sense of it. He loved his pupils too well to think that his care of them should end with the hours of study: he looked on the immortal beings committed to his charge as those for whom he must one day render an account to his God and theirs.

"No, we're all tired of that!" cried the voice of Bat Nayland, as some well-known game was proposed. "I know something that will give us a deal more fun. Let's play at the highwayman and the judge!"

"What's that? what's that?" cried a dozen young voices.

"Oh! it's what I saw at the penny theatre, about a clever thief robbing a judge; only think—robbing a judge!" The last words were repeated around the room in various tones of amusement and surprise.

"Oh! you shall know all about it; but first we must arrange the parts. You, Pat, shall be the thief, and I will be the judge—no, you shall be the judge, and I the thief!" He was interrupted by a burst of laughter.

"Be quiet, will you?—Who'll be the policeman?"

"I! I!" cried several of the children, eager to join in the proposed play.

"Now, Sam, you shall be the fat landlady,"—there was another roar of merriment louder than before,—"for you must know that the thief is to get drunk; that's how he is to be taken by the policeman; and he staggers here and there,"—Bat began to imitate the unsteady movements of an in-

toxicated man, amid the renewed mirth of the children,—“and when they seize him he calls out a great oath—you shall hear it all just as I heard it.”

“I hope not,” said Thorn, very quietly, raising his eyes from his book. The boys were quiet in a moment; they had almost forgotten the presence of their teacher.

“Why, sir, do you think that there is any harm?” said Bat Nayland; “it does not make us thieves to have a little fun about them.”

“It lessens your horror for their crime. And remember the words in the Bible: *Fools make a mock at sin*. Can you imagine any true child of God laughing at theft, drunkenness, and swearing?”

There was profound silence in the room.

“This is one cause, I believe, why penny theatres are one of the most fruitful sources of vice and ruin to those who attend them. Wickedness, instead of appearing hateful as it does in God’s Word, is made amusing, and

even sometimes attractive ; and those who willingly place themselves in the way of being corrupted by such sights, only mock the Holy One when they pray, *Lead us not into temptation.*

“But,” continued the teacher, in a more cheerful tone, “if I have stopped your amusement in one way, it is but fair that I should contribute to it in another. I hear the rain still pattering without,—what would you say to my telling you a story ?”

“A story, a story !” repeated the scholars, forming in a little circle around their teacher ; for where are the children to be found upon earth on whom that word does not act like a spell ?

“It is now long, long ago,” commenced Thorn, “nearly two hundred years, since the fearful plague raged in London. Nothing which we have witnessed in these happier days can give an idea of the horrors of that time. It is said that nearly seventy thousand people perished of this awful malady ;




THE TEACHER'S STORY.

some authors make the number even ninety thousand. The nearest relatives were afraid

of each other. When an unfortunate being showed symptoms that the disease had seized him—the swelling under the arms, the pain in the throat, the black spots, which were signs of the plague—his very servants fled from him in terror ; and unless some one was found to help the sufferer, from love even stronger than fear of death, he was left to perish alone ; for the plague was fearfully infectious. When a door was marked with a cross, the sign that the fearful scourge had entered the house, it was shunned by all but the driver of the dead-cart,—that gloomy conveyance which moved slowly through the silent streets to carry away the bodies of those who had sunk beneath the terrible disease !”

“Was London ever in such a horrible state ?” cried Bat Nayland ; “it must have been a thousand times worse than the cholera !”

“What I have told you about it I believe to be strictly true ; I leave you all, however,



to judge whether what I am about to relate can be so.




REMOVING THE DEAD.

“In a small house, at the time when the plague was raging, dwelt a widow with five

young children. She loved them with the fondest, truest love ; they were all that were left her in the world. From the first appearance of the plague in London her heart had been full of painful anxiety—far less for herself than for them. Determined to take every human precaution to guard her little ones from danger, she forbade them to quit the house, which she only left herself in order to procure food, holding a handkerchief steeped in vinegar before her face, as far as possible to keep out infection. Her anxiety became yet more distressing when she saw one morning on the door of the very opposite house the fatal sign marked, and below it chalked the heart-touching words, ‘ Lord, have mercy upon us ! ’

“ That day the mother was compelled to go out for bread. She left her home with a very heavy heart, first looking earnestly upon all and each of her children, to see if they yet appeared healthy and well, repeating her command that none should stir out,




and inwardly breathing a prayer that the Almighty would preserve them during her absence.

“As she returned with hurried steps towards her home, shuddering at the recollection of the sights of horror which she had seen in the course of her walk, with terror she observed her eldest son *playing upon the very threshold of the infected house*, and trying to imitate with a piece of chalk the dreadful signs upon the door.”

“The little idiot!”—“He must have been without his senses!”—“What did the poor mother do?” were the exclamations that burst from Thorn’s listeners.


“She could not speak, in the transport of her anger and grief; she seized him by the arm, and dragged him into her own house, with feelings which only a mother can understand. She found her four other children assembled in her little parlour, amusing themselves by—would you believe it?—playing at *catching the plague!*”



“Oh no, no!” cried the children at once. “You told us that we should judge whether the story were true, and we are sure that this cannot be true.”

“And why not?” inquired the teacher.

“Because,” answered Bat, replying for the rest, “the plague was too horrible a thing to make a joke of. Just at the time when their mother was so anxious, when thousands were suffering so much around them—no, no; that would have been too bad; they could never have made game of the plague!”

- “And yet, what were my pupils doing ten minutes ago but making game of a far worse disease than the plague—the fatal disease of sin? Its spots are blacker, the pain it gives more terrible; often has it caused the death of the body, and, except where repented of and forsaken, the death, the endless death of the soul. Oh, my children! it may be your lot, as it was that mother’s, to be *obliged* to go out and meet the danger, for
- 

the Almighty may have seen good to place you in situations of great temptation ; but, if so, take every means of guarding your own hearts by faith, watchfulness, and prayer. But, oh ! never wilfully throw yourselves into temptation,—*do not play upon the threshold of the infected house*—do not trifle with the danger which it is possible to avoid ; and when inclined to think lightly or speak lightly of that which brought ruin and death into the world, remember that *fools make a mock at sin*, but that to free us from its terrible disease, and the fatal consequences which it brings, cost the Eternal Son of the Most High tears, blood, and even life itself !”

Fools make a mock at sin ; but, oh !
God's wiser children do not so :
 They know too well the strife with sin,
 How hard the battle is to win ;
 They laugh not at the wound within,
For they its danger know.
Oh, guide thy mirth by wisdom's rules,
For sorrow ends the laugh of fools !

Fools make a mock at sin ; but, oh !
Lost, guilty spirits do not so :

THE GREAT PLAGUE.

They know too well the price it cost ;
They know through it that heaven was lost,
No drowning seaman, tempest-tost,
Jests as he sinks below !
Oh, guide thy mirth by wisdom's rules,
For sorrow ends the laugh of fools !

Fools make a mock at sin ; but, oh !
God's holy angels do not so :
For they upon the Cross have gazed, —
The Cross which sin, *our* sin, had raised, —
And viewed, all wondering and amazed,
A Saviour's life-blood flow !
Then write these words thy heart within :—
Fools, and fools only, mock at sin !





Good-Bye.


“GOOD-BYE to you, Mr. Aylmer ;
I’m sorry that we’re not to see you again till the summer. You’ve always been ready with a good word, ay, and a helping hand too, for the poor. I’ll miss your pleasant smile in those dull, dark, wintry days, as have little enough to light ’em. And little Emmy—she’ll miss you, too ; won’t you, my lamb ?” said the Widow Cowell, as she lifted up in her arms a pretty blue-eyed child of about four years of age, to bid good-bye to the Scripture-reader who was going to a distant part of the country.

“Good-bye, Mary Cowell,” said Aylmer,

shaking with kindness the thin hand which the widow held out ; “and good-bye to you, dear little one,” he added, as bending forward he kissed the brow of the child, between the clustering locks of gold. “It’s a solemn word ‘good-bye,’ when we think of the meaning that’s in it.”

“I did not know that it had any particular meaning,” said Mary ; “it’s a word that we’re always a-saying, and sometimes with a heavy heart.”

“Good-bye, is ‘God be with you’ shortened to a single word. It is a blessing to the one who departs echoed back to the one who remains. God be with you, Mary Cowell ; may you feel His presence in the street—in the shop—by your board—by your bed—in your heart ! You’ll have many a temptation to struggle against,—God be with you in the hour of temptation ! you’ll have many a trial to bear,—God be with you then, and He will turn all these trials into blessings ! You’ve a little one



there, dear to your heart ; remember that *like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him !*"

"Ay, bless her heart ! I love her !" thought Mary, as she led her little girl back into the small room which she hired by the week, in one of the back streets of London. "But if God pities me, like as a father pitieth his children, why does He so often leave me to want—why does He make my lot so hard ? I'm sure I'd keep my darling from every trouble if I could, and if I had the means, she should sleep as soft and fare as well as any little lady in the land !"

And in truth Mary Cowell was a kind and tender mother. The child had ever the largest share of the scanty meal ; and while the mother's shawl was threadbare, soft and warm was the knitted tippet that wrapped the little girl. Mary took a pride in her Emmy ; she never suffered her to run about the streets dirty and barefoot like many of the children of her neighbours. Emmy's face

was washed and her yellow curls smoothed out every morning, and proudly did the fond mother look at her little darling. The greatest sorrow which poverty brought to Mary Cowell, was that it hindered her from giving every comfort and pleasure to her child.


“Mother,” said Emmy on the following day, as she watched the widow preparing to go out, putting on her rusty black bonnet and thin patched shawl; “mother, you won’t take the basket; it’s Sunday—I hears the bells a-ringing.”

“I must go,” said Mary, with a sigh.

“But didn’t the good man tell us it was bad to go out a-sellin’ on the Sunday?” asked the child, with a grave look of inquiry in her innocent eyes.

“Poor folk must eat,” said the widow sadly; “God will not be hard upon us if want drives us to do what we never should do if we’d only enough to live on.”

“May Emmy go wid you, mother?”



“No, my lamb,” answered Mary; “not to stand at the corner of the street in this bitter sharp wind, and just catch your death of cold. It chills one to the bones,” added the widow, stirring up in her little grate the fire which burned brightly and briskly, for the weather was frosty and keen. Mary then took the remains of the morning’s meal, the half-loaf and small jug of milk, and put them on the mantelpiece, out of reach of the child. Her last care was to place a wire-guard before the fire. Having often to leave her little girl alone in the room, Mary dreaded her falling into danger, and had, by self-denial, scraped up a sufficient number of pence to buy an old wire fire-guard.

“Now remain quiet there, my jewel! don’t get into mischief,” said Mary. “Look at the pretty prints on the wall; mother won’t be long afore she comes back with something nice for her darling!” So saying, the widow kissed the child, took up her basket, and went to the door.

“ Good-bye, mother ! ” cried Emmy. The last sound which Mary heard as she went down the old creaking stair was the “ good-bye ” from the sweet little voice whose tones she loved so well.

“ She’s a-blessing me without knowing it,” thought Mary, recalling the words of the Scripture-reader ; “ she’s a-saying ‘ God be with you ! ’ I’m afraid all’s not right with me, for it seems as if I couldn’t take any comfort from the thought of God being with me. It makes my conscience uneasy to know that He is watching me now that I’m a-going to break His law, and sell on His holy day.”

O reader, if ever the thought of the presence of your heavenly Father give you a feeling of fear, rather than a feeling of comfort, be sure that you are wandering from the right way, and—whatever excuse you may make for yourself—that you are doing or thinking something that puts your soul in danger.

As Mary slowly made her way with her heavy basket to the corner of the street where she usually stood to sell, a friend of hers passed her on the way, but stopped and turned round to ask after Emmy, who had not been well. A few words were exchanged between the two women, and then the friend, who had a prayer-book in her hand, said, "I can't stop longer now; I don't like to be late for church. Good-bye, Mrs. Cowell."

"Good-bye," repeated poor Mary. "Ah," she said, with a sigh, as she watched her friend hastening on, "God will be with *her*, to bless her, for I know that Martha serves Him. Ofttimes I've heard her say, '*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*;' and though she's no better off than myself, it's wonderful—it is—how she has always had friends raised up for her in her troubles; and when trials came the thickest, how somehow or other a clear way out was always opened afore her. Martha says the best thing is to trust God and obey Him, and that

we don't obey because we don't *trust*. Maybe there's truth in that word; for if I really believed what Aylmer told me, that God cares for me as I care for my Emmy, I should do even just as He bids me, and keep the Sabbath-day holy. But it's hard to be hindered getting my bread honestly on one day out of seven; I don't see the harm in a poor widow woman selling a little on Sundays."

And yet Mary's mind was not easy; she had learned enough of God's Word to know that by selling her oranges and nuts upon the day which the Lord hath set apart for Himself, she was not only sinning herself, but leading others into sin. When little children thronged round her basket, eager to buy her fruit, Mary could not forget—she wished that she could—the solemn warning of the Lord: *Whoso shall offend (cause to sin) one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were*

drowned in the depth of the sea. There was a struggle in the mind of Mary between faith and distrust—between duty and inclination—between the desire to follow her own will and the knowledge that in all things we ought to follow the will of God. Which side in the end won the victory, will appear in the end of my story. We will leave the widow doubting and hesitating at the corner of the street, and return to little Emmy, whom her mother had left carefully shut up in her lodging.

The child amused herself for some minutes, as the widow had desired her to do, by looking at the coarse prints which were stuck with pins on the white-washed wall. But Emmy soon tired of this,—she had seen them so often before. Then she sat down in front of the fire, and warmed her little red hands at the kindly blaze, and wished that that tiresome wire-guard were away, that kept so much of the glow out.

“ Why should mother not let me get *all*

the good of the fire?" said the little murmuring girl. "I'm sure there's no use in that thing that puts the fire in a cage, and keeps me from doing what I like, and making it blaze up high!" The child did not consider that one much older and wiser than herself was likely to have good reasons for putting on the guard. Emmy was no better judge of these reasons than the widow herself was of the wisdom which had fenced round the Sabbath with the command, *In it thou shalt do no manner of work*. All that either mother or child had to do was simply to *trust* and *obey*. But Emmy had a wilful temper, and could not bear anything like restraint.

Presently, from looking at the fire, the child cast her eyes on the mantelpiece above it, and the bread and white jug upon it.

"Why did mother put them up there, when she knew that Emmy might be hungry, and want to eat before she comes home!" And impatiently the child stretched out her


hand, and rose on her tip-toes, trying to reach the food. She could not touch the lower part of the shelf, and well was it for Emmy that the guard, so wisely placed over the fire, prevented her little frock from catching the flame as she did so.

“Emmy will pull the chair to the place and climb up, and get at the loaf!” cried the child, determined by some means to have her own way, and procure what she thought that she needed. She ran off to a chair placed in a corner, which was almost the only article of furniture, besides the bed, to be found in that bare little room. But the chair was of clumsy and heavy make, and had several articles heaped upon it: all the efforts of Emmy were of no avail to drag it out of its place.

The difficulty which she found in getting what she desired only served to increase the eagerness of the child and her determination to have the loaf which had been purposely placed out of her reach. Emmy was ready

to cry, and accuse her tender mother of unkindness. And was she not in this but too much like many who doubt the love of their Heavenly Father because He has not placed in their hands what they think to be needful for their comfort ?

At last a thought came into the mind of little Emmy, as she gazed, through her tears, at the fire. She had not strength to move the big chair ; in vain she had struggled to do so ; but might she not manage to move the guard, and would it not serve her for a footstool to reach the loaf on the mantelpiece ? But then mother had told her so often not to meddle with the guard. *Why* should mother forbid her to touch it ? The voice of discontent and distrust in the bosom of the little child was much the same as that whose whisperings had led Mary Cowell to go out selling on Sunday. With both parent and daughter it proved to be stronger than conscience. Emmy laid hold of the guard and shook it ; but old as it was, she



had not the power to pull it from its place. Presently, however, the child felt that though she could not pull she could lift it. With eager pleasure Emmy raised the guard high enough to release its iron hooks from the bars, and then there was nothing to prevent her from removing the fence altogether.

Emmy's first pleasure was to poke up the fire with the little rusty bit of a poker which she had seen her mother use for the purpose, but which she herself had never been permitted to touch. Then, eager to get at the loaf, she put down the guard in front of the fire, so that she might be able to step upon it. Wretched, disobedient little child!—with one foot on that trembling, yielding wire-work, one hand stretched up to take food not lawfully her own, her dress so close to the flame that in another moment it must be wrapped in a roaring blaze, what can now save her from destruction?

Suddenly the door opened, and with a cry of terror Mary Cowell sprang forward in.



EMMY IN DANGER.

time—but just in time—to snatch her only child away from a terrible death!

“Oh, thank God—thank God—that I came home, that He made me turn back!” exclaimed the widow, bursting into tears.

Little Emmy was punished, as she well deserved to be, for breaking her mother's command, and doing what she knew that she ought not to have done. But Mary Cowell, with a contrite heart, owned to herself, and confessed to God, that she had deserved sharper punishment than her child. There had been *doubt* and *disobedience* in both ; but the older sinner was the greater, for she had most cause to trust the providence of a Father who is almighty as well as all-good. If the child had removed a guard carefully and wisely placed before that which, while kept to its proper use, is one of our greatest blessings, but which, to those who *misuse* it, may prove the cause of burning and death, what had the mother done ? She had tried on the Sabbath to earn bread by treading her duty under foot—by putting aside, as far as she could, that law by which the great God has fenced round His holy day, *Thou shalt do no manner of work*.

Grateful for the warning given her, never

again did Mary carry forth her basket on the Sabbath. Henceforth, by example as well as by precept, she brought up her little one in the fear and love of God. And when, after many years, the widow was called home to her Heavenly Father, she could with peaceful hope thus bid her daughter farewell:

“Good-bye, my loved one! God be with you in your trouble; He has never failed me in mine. *Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* Good-bye, until we meet again, through the Saviour’s merits—the Saviour’s love—in His kingdom of glory!”





Try Again.

“H! try again, father, try again!”
What a sad, pleading voice uttered the words, what a pale little face was turned towards Peter Parsons, as he sat, his elbows resting on the beer-stained table, with haggard cheek and blood-shot eyes, which told too well the tale of how the last night had been spent.

“It’s no use trying to give it up, I have tried and I can’t do it,” was the father’s dogged, despairing reply; “I know the drink will be my ruin, but if it were poison, I must have it! There’s Mr. Barker, my employer, he gave me warning yesterday; he said he couldn’t stand my habits longer, that he was

TRY AGAIN.
to give me up, but could have none
steady men to serve him. There's the



"OH! TRY AGAIN, FATHER, TRY AGAIN!"

third place I've lost in the same
know the road I'm treading; I k

100

100

100

100

100

sorry to give me up, but could have none but steady men to serve him. There's the



"OH! TRY AGAIN, FATHER, TRY AGAIN!"

third place I've lost in the same way. I know the road I'm treading; I know what

lies at the end on't ; I'm going to ruin with my eyes wide open ;—but I can't help it, I must have the drink !” And Peter Parsons let his chin sink on his breast, and looked the picture of a wretched, degraded sinner. No wonder that he shrunk from looking around him at what had once been a comfortable home ! Where was the clock that had ticked so cheerily, given as a wedding-present to his wife ? Where was the neat mahogany press, in which he had taken such pride, bought with the savings of months of toil ? Where was the valued old Family Bible, which his father and grandfather had used before him ? All at the pawnbroker's, pledged for drink !

And if it pained the wretched drunkard to look at bare walls and fireless grates, yet more it pained him to see the effects of his sin in the pale sad face of his sweet little Esther, her clothes so patched and threadbare, the tearful eyes that, but for him, would have been bright with the sunshine of childhood.

“ I have tried,” Peter muttered to himself, without raising his drooping head ; “ the teetotallers, they spoke to me, and urged me, and they made it as clear as day that half the misery in the city came all along of the drink ; that with every penny which I threw down at the bar of the public, I was paying my fare to the workhouse, or buying the nails for my coffin ! They got me to take the pledge, and I thought that the danger was over. I’d given my word, and I’d keep it. And for weeks all went on straight enough ; money came in, comfort came back, and my poor wife looked happy again ! But then I fell into sore temptation, and it seemed as if I’d no more strength than a babe in the claws of a lion. I woke one morning—one wretched morning—to find my pledge broken, my character disgraced, and the habit of hard drinking fifty times stronger on me than ever.

“ And I tried again,”—thus the miserable man continued muttering to himself, scarcely

conscious of the presence of the poor little girl at his side—" 'twas when my Sarah lay a-dying, and I couldn't a-bear to drink away the comfort she needed so much. Two days I abstained, but on the third—" Memory was like a barbed arrow in the heart of the miserable widower, his words were choked in his throat, and instead of finishing his sentence he uttered a heavy groan.

Esther did not venture for several moments to speak ; tears were fast flowing down her pale cheeks. She, like her unhappy parent, was tempted to give way to despair ; but the child had learned in her Bible *always to pray and never to faint* ; and though her prayers had as yet seemed unanswered, faith whispered to her, "Try again."


"Child !" said Peter, suddenly raising his head, and fixing his bleared eyes on his daughter, "when once a man has got into the reg'lar habit of drinking, there's nothing as can keep him from it. It's like a fever, like a madness ! Interest can't do it, resolves

can't do it, even care for a family can't do it; for no one on earth loved a wife or child better than I have done !”

“ Can't God's grace do it ?” faltered Esther, almost afraid to speak out the words.

“ Don't talk to me of such matters !” cried Peter, starting from his seat and pacing up and down the room, like one who is restless from pain. “ I used to think on God once, but I dare not think on Him now ; it's like going to judgment before the time, to think on the anger of God !”

“ But mayn't we think on the *love* of God ?” murmured Esther, with trembling earnestness in her tone. “ O father ! dear, dear father ! let me say one verse—only one little verse that the teacher gave me yesterday to learn,—*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* She said we could overcome temptations through Him ; have our sins forgiven through Him ; and that if He give us His Spirit, we shall be *more than conquerors through Him !*”



“Go to your school, child ; go to your school !” cried Peter, half in anger and half in sorrow. “Such words may do well enough for such as ye ; I’m too old to be learning them now !” And seeing that his little girl paused, he motioned impatiently for her to leave him.


Esther dared speak no more to her father, but she could pray for him still to her God. As she slipped on her rusty black bonnet and shabby cloak, preparing to go to the school, her whole heart was full of prayer. “O God ! for the sake of Thy blessed Son, help my poor father, save my poor father, don’t let the enemy tempt him away ;” and before Esther quitted the house, with a trembling hand she placed her little Testament on the table. Esther had often done so before, in hopes that her father might read it, as he once used to read the great Bible. Esther had always found her Testament lying exactly where she had put it, unopened and untouched ; but in a spirit of

faith and hope she determined to "try again."

And this time Peter Parsons took up the book ; he could scarcely have said why he did so. Perhaps it was because he found any kind of employment more tolerable than thinking ; perhaps he was scarcely conscious of what he was doing, as he carelessly turned over the leaves. His eye was first attracted by a name like his own ; it rested on the account of the Lord appearing to Peter and other disciples, walking on the waves of the sea.

"Ah, he was a different Peter, indeed, who saw that sight !" thought the man ; "he was a great apostle, and a holy martyr besides ; and yet, if I mind me right of his story, 'twas more than once that he failed and fell. I'll just look again at what is said in the Bible about it." And seating himself at the table, Peter read out, half aloud, making his comments as he proceeded:—

"Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."




“And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

“Ay,” observed the reader, half closing the book, “he was a bold man Peter! He could walk on the sea, just as I’ve known some men go on straight and steady over temptations, never stumbling nor sinking, firm as a rock amid all! I’ve known them as have taken the pledge and never broken it once; nothing would tempt them to drink. But it isn’t every man as can walk on a sea of temptation like that,—it ain’t in human nature!” And again the poor victim of intemperance turned to the Holy Book.

“But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me!”

Parsons stopped for some moments, and remained with his eyes resting on the last sentence, and his mind buried in thought.



“What!” he muttered to himself, “*Peter began to sink*; he had not strength to stand by himself, he—a saint—an apostle—had to cry out aloud, *Lord, save me!* It seems that, full of faith and zeal as he was, he was but flesh and blood after all. I’ll read on; I’ll see if the Lord came at once to the drowning man’s help.

“*And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*”

Parsons closed the book, rose from his seat, and again paced up and down the room. He did not utter a word aloud; but if the thoughts of his heart could have been read, they would have been something like this:—

“The Lord heard him, the Lord cared for him, the Lord stretched out His hand to save him when he had no strength to save himself. There was mighty love shown, and mighty power! Is not the same Saviour able still *to save to the uttermost?* I don’t

know where to turn to these words, but I'm sure that I read them long ago in my Bible. *Able to save; ay, but is He willing?* What was it that the Lord said to Peter: *Thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* What if I went to Him straight, and asked Him to save me from sinking; going lower and lower down in the depths of sin! Would the Lord stretch out His hand to me, to me whom all the world despises, to me whom every one else gives up?" Again Peter went to the table, and opened the little Testament left by his praying child. The first verse on which his glance fell seemed to him almost like a message sent to him direct from God: "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*"

"I'll hold by this promise!" exclaimed Parsons, grasping the little book as he spoke;


“ I’ve tried to go right, but I’ve failed ; I’ve wished to give up sin, but the habit was too strong for me ; now I’ll cast myself, just as Peter did, on the mercy and strength of my Lord, and hoping for the help of His grace, I’ll try again—I’ll try yet again ! ”

While Parsons’ pale little girl, as she walked along the gloomy streets, was silently praying all the way for her father, another little girl, in a comfortable home, was pleading the cause of poor Peter. Mr. Barker, his late employer, sat in his large red-leather arm-chair, with his feet on the fender, before a blazing fire, with Clara, his youngest daughter, seated upon his knee.

“ Oh, papa, I wish that you would try him again, only once ! ” said the gentle little lady, holding her father’s hand fast imprisoned between both of her own.

“ And why should I try him again ? ” said Mr. Barker, amused at the earnest tone of the little pleader.

“ Oh, because of his poor little girl—the




best girl, mamma says, in the school. She looks so pale, and thin, and sad ; and I've heard that when her mother was dying, Esther watched and nursed her so fondly. It is not her fault that her father drinks ; it is enough to break her heart."

"We will look after her," said Mr. Barker ; "the man may ruin himself, but he shall not ruin his child. I should think that she is almost old enough to go out into service, if mamma could find her a nice easy place."

"But she would not be happy, papa ; how could she be happy in any place when she knew that her own father was going down—down—down to ruin ? Oh, try him again, papa ! just give him one other chance ; if he knows that it is his very last, perhaps he may turn and repent."


Clara pleaded, urged, and entreated, and at length won her parent to consent to overlook for this once the offence of Parsons. Mr. Barker was a kind-hearted master, and



he was himself unwilling by severity to drive an unhappy man to despair. Though shaking his head doubtfully, and expressing his belief that no good would result from the trial, he agreed to send word to Parsons to call at his office on the following morning.

Thus, at the same hour, *Faith* bade a wanderer "try again" to wrestle with his besetting sin, believing that a gracious God was willing and able to help him ; *Hope* bade poor Esther "try again" to bring down by earnest prayer a blessing upon her father ; and *Charity* bade the Barkers "try again" to aid an erring fellow-creature by giving him an opportunity of winning back the good name which he had lost.

I will not describe all the inward struggles of Parsons, nor the difficulties which he encountered from the power of an evil habit. Often was he tempted, often discouraged, often did he almost give up in despair. But he now used the Word of God as his weapon, and faith in God as his shield ; and he found in



the end that he who resists the devil will make him turn and flee !

When the long bright summer days had returned, again the old clock ticked cheerily in its place behind the door, and once more upon the table lay the valued Family Bible. Peter Parsons sat with his child, as he had done on the morning on which my story opened ; but how changed was the appearance of each from what it then had been ! Parsons no longer hung down his head, as if ashamed to look his fellow-man in the face : his eye was clear and steady ; his dress decent and clean ; and instead of bitter tears, there were roses on Esther's cheek !

" Oh, father, are we not happy ? " she exclaimed, as the bright glow of the setting sun bathed the room in light.


" If I be happy here," said Parsons, looking with earnest thought into the golden clouds above, " or if I've a hope of being happy in the better world that's to come, I think, my Esther, that under God I owe it

all to you. I was going fast on the downhill road, I was giving up all effort to stop, when your prayers—and your words—and your tears—and the blessed Book which you put in my way, made me see that there was hope even for me! They led me to ‘try again’ to get back to the straight, safe path, to be a good father to you, my child, and a faithful servant to my God!”





Hold Fast.

“AY, my child, I’ve nothing else to hold by, either in life or death, but the great truth, that *Christ died for sinners*. It’s a joyful thing to hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which God hath given us through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

The speaker was Peter Ross, a blind and aged man, with bald head and silvery beard, who, clad in a pauper’s dress, had come, as he was allowed once a fortnight to do, to visit the house of his son. The listener was a rosy-cheeked girl, about nine years of age, who, seated at his feet, and resting her little arms on his knee, looked up lovingly into his face.

“Ah, grandfather,” said Rose, “if *you* did not hope to go to heaven, I don’t know who else could! You are so good, so patient, so kind; you have served God all your life long; you have never been given to drinking and swearing, like the wicked men in our court, and I really think that you know nearly half of the Bible by heart! I’m certain that you deserve heaven!”

“Rose, Rose,” cried the old man earnestly, “my *only* plea for heaven is this,—

‘I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
But Jesus Christ is my all in all!’”

“I can’t tell how it is,” said Rose, looking into his face with a puzzled expression, “the best people seem to think themselves the worst. If I was half as good as you are, grandfather, I’d be quite sure of getting to heaven.”

“By your good works, my child?”

“Yes, by my good works,” repeated Rose. “I can see why bad people hope to be saved only by the Lord; but it must be so very *different* with pious people like you!”

"Rose," said the blind old man, "do you think that I ever pass *one day* without sin?"

"I'm sure that you do," replied Rose; "I never knew you do anything wrong."

"If my salvation were to depend upon my passing one waking *hour* without sin, Rose, my poor soul would be lost! Remember that God looks at the *heart*. His pure eyes read the evil *thought*; He knows not only the sinful things that we *do*, but the duties which we leave *undone*. *All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*: that truth is written in the Bible."

"But I can't see," persisted the little girl, "that you need to be saved by the Lord just in the same way as Luke Dobson did, who was run over by a cart when he was drunk. He lay ill for months and months; and father says that he repented, and hoped to go to heaven at last, because the Lord died for sinners. Now there must be a very great difference between his case and yours, for *he was once a very bad man, and treated*


his wife very cruelly when he had been at the public."

"My dear child," said the aged Christian, laying his thin hand on the curly head of Rose, "I have no more power to reach heaven by my works than poor Luke Dobson had by his. *The blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin*, is just as much needed to wash away mine as it was to wash away his. He depended on the mercy of the Saviour, and I have nought else to depend on."

"I can't understand that," said Rose.

"I'll tell you what happened to me in my youth, Rose, nigh threescore years ago, when I was not much older than you are. It seems to me a sort of picture, as it were, of the way in which sinners are saved, and how there's nothing that we have to trust to but God's mercy in Christ."

"I should like to hear what happened to you, grandfather ; but I want to ask just one question first. If the wicked and the steady



all need mercy alike, where's the use of doing good, and trying to put away our sins? Why should we not live as we choose, and trust that all will come right in the end?"

Old Peter looked grave as he replied,—
"Because no one who really belongs to the Saviour can bear to continue in wickedness. The Lord died not only to save His people from hell, but from sin; and they hate and dread the one, as they hate and dread the other. I'll try and show you what I mean by my story.

"It's nigh sixty years ago, as I said, when I was a young, strong, active lad, that I lived for some months by the sea-shore. Our dwelling was near the beach, in a place where the cliffs were rugged and high—so high, that when we looked from the top of one of them, men walking on the sands beneath seemed little bigger than crows.

"I set out one day to gather shells; for that was a wonderful place for shells, and

the gentry as came to the village hard by used often to buy them from us. I wasn't going alone. I took with me my brother, poor Sam. He and I went together, each with a bag to hold the shells, which was hung by a long string round our necks, so as to leave our hands quite free. The last thing our mother said to us afore we started was this: 'Mind, lads, and don't go too far; for the tide is on the turn, and the waves be running high, and if ye go as far as High-cliff, there's danger that ye both may be drowned.' 'No fear, mother,' said I; 'even if the tide should come in upon us, I reckon that I'm active and strong enough to climb to the top of the cliff. But I cannot say as much for Sam, with his weak arms and the swelling on his ankle; I know he has no chance of climbing, so I'll keep out of harm's way for his sake.'

"'And for your own too, Peter,' said Sam, as we walked along the beach together; 'you are strong and active, to be sure, but

you are no more able than I be to climb up such a mighty high cliff.'

" 'There may be two opinions as to that,' said I ; for I had a great notion of my own powers, and prided myself on being agile as a goat on the rocks. Well," pursued the blind pauper, "we had plenty of luck that day in finding shells on the shore ; both of us filled our bags, and we were so eager and pleased with our success, that we wandered on further and further, and scarce gave a thought to the tide, till we saw the white creamy foam tossed on the sand from the waves that came rolling and tumbling in-shore, and we looked up and saw the great white cliff rising high and bluff before us !

" 'I say, Sam,' cried I, 'just see how the tide's coming in ! 'tis time for us to make the best of our way back to mother !'

"My brother turned white as a sheet. 'Tis too late for that !' said he, giving a wildered gaze at the waste of heaving billows. For the coast just there made a bend

like a crescent, and though we stood upon dry land still, the white-topped waves, both afore and ahind us, were rolling right up to the cliff! Where we had walked dry-shod not an hour before, there was nothing to be seen but the waters, which soon would cover the place where we were!

“‘What’s to be done?’ cried my brother, as he looked up at the great rocky wall before us.

“‘Keep a good heart!’ said I. ‘I’ll climb up to the top o’ the cliff, and then I’ll get help and a rope, and we’ll draw you up to safety.’

“So I put down my bag, and I pulled off my jacket, for it was clear enough that I could not climb with them. I knew well, though I didn’t choose to say it, that it would be hard work to get to the top of so high and steep a cliff; but I did not know, I would not believe, that it was *impossible* for me to do so. By dint of straining every muscle, clasping, clutching at every jutting

crag or little rock-plant that offered a hold, I managed to struggle up a few yards. But the way grew steeper and harder. I could scarcely find place for my foot, or hold for my hand; the earth was slipping beneath me. I panted—I gasped—I strained;—feeling myself falling, I tried, with a violent effort, to catch hold of a little stump that seemed to be just beyond my reach. I caught it, but lost my footing—hung for a moment by one hand—then the stump gave way, and with a cry of fear I fell heavily down the rock.”

“O grandfather! were you much hurt?” exclaimed Rose, who had listened with breathless interest to Peter’s account of his perilous adventure.

“Not badly hurt,” said the blind man; “but enough bruised and shaken to be kept from the folly of trying the climbing again.”


“Then you were just in the same case as your brother, though you had fancied your-

self so much better able to get to the top than he."

"That's it ; that's what I wished you to see!" cried Peter. "It is for that I tell you the story. We were alike helpless, my child; the strong and the weak, the active and the maimed, neither could reach the top ; both were just in the same danger of being drowned by the coming tide. And so it is with the matters of the soul. One man seems wiser, another better, another bolder than his fellows ; but the wisest, the boldest, the best can never reach heaven by their efforts. The way is too high, too steep, to be climbed ! Their good deeds break away ; they can't support them ; they can't hold them up from destruction !"

"But how were you saved ?" exclaimed Rose, more eager to hear the story than to gather its moral.


"My brother and I felt that there was but one thing which we could do,—we must loudly call out for assistance. We cried



aloud again and again ; we lifted up our voices with all our might, and as God in His mercy ordered, the sound of our cries was heard from the top of the cliff. And so it is with the sinner, my child, when he feels that he is in danger of eternal death, when he finds that he has no power in himself to help himself, and that unless God comes to his aid, he is lost and ruined for ever. The cry, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* is heard even above the heavens, and mercy comes to the rescue !”

“ Was a rope let down from the top of the cliff ? ” asked the impatient Rose.

“ A rope was let down,” replied Peter, “ and it was long enough and strong enough to save us. It was let down not a minute too soon, for already the sand on which we stood was washed by every advancing wave ! Sam, who was terribly frightened, at once caught hold of the rope, and clung to it as for his life. Nay, if I remember right, he fastened it round his body. But my courage,



or rather presumption, had risen once more, as soon as I found that means were provided to draw us up safely beyond the reach of danger. I put on my jacket again, and passed the string of my bag of shells round my neck. 'Since I have not to climb,' cried I, 'there's no use in leaving them behind; I've no mind to part with one of 'em !' Now, mark my words, Rose, my child: I was thinking in an earthly matter as you thought just now when you said, 'If the wicked and the steady all need mercy alike, what's the use of doing good, and putting away our sins ?' I believed that the rope was enough to save me. And so in truth it was ; but how could I hold fast by the rope, when I carried a weight round my neck ?"

"I see—I see !" exclaimed Rose ; "you must leave your heavy bag behind you ; for though the rope might not break, you could not keep your hold on it, while the weight was dragging you down !"

"No more than any man who *wilfully*

keeps one sin can continue safely to hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life. He but deceives himself, if he ever tries to do so. I soon found out, as I was drawn upwards, what a fearful mistake I had made. I had not risen many feet above the sands when a horrible dread arose in my mind that I should never be able to hold on till I had reached the top of the cliff. The muscles of my arms ached terribly, my fingers could scarcely keep their grasp, and the string round my neck seemed to choke me, like the gripe of an iron hand.

“ ‘Make haste!’ I gasped out in agony, scarce able to bring out the words. ‘Oh! be quick—be quick—or I shall be forced to let go!’

“ ‘Hold fast, brother, hold fast!’ shouted poor Sam, in mortal terror at my danger. The men above were straining every nerve to pull us up before my strength should fail me; but oh, how fearfully slow we seemed to ascend!



"HOLD FAST, BROTHER, HOLD FAST!"


"The strain on my arms now was torture. My brain grew dizzy. I could scarcely breathe. I had but one thought—one maddening wish—to get rid of the fatal bag

It seemed to grow heavier every moment ; it was as if some barbarous foe were pulling me down to destruction. I felt that unless I could be relieved of the weight, I *must* let go, and be dashed to pieces. I dared not attempt to cling by one weary hand, so as to use the other to untie the fatal string. I cried in despairing agony to God, for I was beyond all help from man. I know not to this day how His mercy wrought,—whether the weight on it snapped the string, or whether in my struggles the knot was untied ; but never till my dying hour shall I forget the sense of relief, when suddenly something gave way, and I felt the weight was gone ; I heard a splash in the waters below, and in another minute was firmly grasped by a hand stretched out from above.”

“O grandfather, what a mercy !” exclaimed Rose, drawing a long breath. Her heart had beat fast at the account of such terrible danger.

“A mercy, indeed!” said the old man solemnly, clasping his hands together, as memory recalled the awful scene. “Had that bag, instead of shells, contained all the wealth of the world, how thankful should I have been to have dropped it into the sea for ever. As that weight was to my body, so is sin to the soul. In vain do we grasp the hope of salvation, in vain do we seem to be raised from a state of danger by the mercy of Christ, if we resolve not to try to cast from us every sin that our God condemns. *Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.* We must *cast away every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us*; not in our own poor strength, but in the power of prayer, looking to God, trusting to God, ready to give up everything for God. Then will His love never fail us; He will never leave us to perish. By His grace shall we *hold fast* to the end, and rejoice for ever in His presence.”


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The Wages of Sin.

“The foolishness of man perverteth his way ; and his heart fretteth against the Lord.”—PROV. xix. 3.

T is very, very hard in one's old age to be driven to poverty, to be neglected by one's friends, forsaken by one's children, left to wear out a weary life in a hateful place like this !”

Such were the words of a miserable old man, who, bed-ridden and helpless, was pouring out his complaint to a humane visitor at the workhouse.

“But, my friend,” replied the lady, “we must remember that these trials are sent by a gracious and merciful God, who *does not*



afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."

"It's all very well for those to talk who don't know what trouble means," said old Sam Butler, in a tone of peevish irritability. "Where is the mercy shown to me? I was once a strong, hearty young man,—none better at cricket or at football; and now I can't so much as creep across this hateful room! I had once my own well-stocked shop, with the customers thronging in and out like bees; and now, but for the work-house, I shouldn't have a roof over my head! I was once surrounded by wife and children,—a thriving, goodly family; and now my wife's in her grave, and the children scattered over the world, and there's not one of them that so much as cares to inquire whether the old man's dead or alive! Oh, it's very hard! it's very, very hard!"

"But there are some comforts and hopes *of which* neither old age nor sickness, neither

man's neglect nor poverty, can ever deprive us."

"Don't talk to me!" cried the old pauper, angrily. "I know all that you're going to say, but there's neither comfort nor hope to me in these things. I never found any in my better days, and I am not likely to find any now!"

The visitor looked shocked and distressed. She felt anxious to speak a message of peace to the wretched old man; but his bitterness of spirit and rebellion of will made her find it difficult to address him. Thinking that to reflect on the trials of others might divert his mind from his own, or give him an indirect lesson on resignation under them, she said, after a few moments' hesitation, "I have recently been visiting one who has known much affliction,—a poor man of the name of Charles Hayes—"

"Charles Hayes!" interrupted the pauper; "as if I did not know him!—my school-fellow when I was a boy, and my neighbour

for twenty long years! I always said he would come to the workhouse,—what with his bad health and his silly scruples about turning an honest penny; thinking everything wrong which did not square with his odd notions, and helping others when he had scarcely enough for himself! I always said he would come to the workhouse. And yet, see what a world this is!” continued Butler with a burst of indignation; “no sooner is he quite laid on the shelf than the gentry take to petting and pampering him as if he were one of themselves! The squire puts him into a nice cottage, the ladies send him blankets and broth, the parson takes a pleasure in visiting him, and he is watched day and night with as much care as if he were one of the lords of the land!”

“Watched by an orphan whom he had generously brought up.”

“Other people have brought up children,” cried the pauper, with something like a groan, “*and have had no comfort in them.* Charles

Hayes had never a child of his own, but he finds one like a daughter by his sick-bed ; he has always been poor, but now in his age I don't believe that he wants for anything,—a friend seems to meet him wherever he turns; and they say that in spite of his weakness and pain he calls himself contented and happy ! Oh, this is a bad world !—a miserable world ! Why should his lot be so different from mine ? Why should he have peace, and I have nothing but trouble ? Why should his friends stick by him, and all mine forsake me ? Why, when I am wearing out my days in a workhouse, should he rest in a home of his own ?”

An answer was on the visitor's lips, but consideration for the feelings of the pauper prevented her from uttering it aloud—“*Because the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow therewith.*” There would have been no use in attempting to point out to the repining old man how godliness, even in this world, brings its reward ;

nor did the lady know enough of the events of Butler's life to be aware how completely his present miseries were the natural consequences of his own conduct. Self had ever been his first object ; to gratify self had been the business of his life. He had not served God in the time of his health ; he could not look to God in the hour of his helplessness and need. He had done nothing to benefit man, and man cared nothing for him now, though compassion might bring a few, like the visitor at the workhouse, to spend some minutes beside him as a disagreeable duty.


Yet Sam Butler had set out in life with no bad prospects. Blessed with cheerful spirits, buoyant health, a fair education, and good name, and settled in a comfortable situation, he seemed likely to do well in the world, and spend a very prosperous life.

The first great mistake which Butler made was that of marrying for money. His master was old and infirm, and willing to give up *his* business whenever his only daughter

should marry one able to assist her in carrying it on. Betsy was neither pleasing in person nor agreeable in manner. She was proud, passionate, and self-willed, with a heart utterly worldly, in which piety had never found a place. Sam cared nothing for her, but he cared much for the shop; and, regardless of the command to marry *only in the Lord*, he vowed to love and cherish until death a woman whom he secretly despised. Degraded in his own eyes by his worldly marriage, Butler was not long in discovering that he had sold his happiness for gold. The comfort of a cheerful, peaceful home was never to be his. Whenever he crossed his own threshold, the first sound which struck his ears was the voice of peevishness and ill-temper. What wonder if he often passed his evenings at places which it would have been better for him if he had never entered, and sought elsewhere for that enjoyment which by his own hearth he never could find !

At this time Charles Hayes was the near neighbour of Sam Butler. He was united to one who, like himself, was serving God with a humble heart and a cheerful, contented spirit. If Charles's home was lowly, it was peaceful ; if he had little of this world's goods, he had few of its cares : labour and poverty might be his lot, but piety and love sweetened all.

But affliction, from which even the most faithful servants of God are not exempted, was sent to the cottage of Charles Hayes. His beloved partner was suddenly called to her rest. Sore was the trial to the Christian when he stood by the grave of the young wife, who had been dearer to him than all the world beside, and who was worthy of all his affection. But his was a sorrow *not without hope*. He looked forward, even when grief bowed his heart to the dust, to a blessed reunion in a land where parting shall never be known ; though divided from his wife by death, he could think of her as "not lost,



but gone before ;” and when time had mellowed the sharpness of his pain, there was no earthly pleasure for which he would have exchanged the sweet remembrance of years spent in happiness with one who was now an angel in heaven !

Sam Butler had a family, and, as he would proudly say, there were no children in all the village so healthy and handsome as his own. He was by no means wanting in parental affection ; and it was a pleasing sight to see him in the evening, when the day’s business was over, with one laughing little one perched on his shoulder, and another holding fast to his hand, chasing the third down a daisy-mottled slope, while the neighbourhood rang with the sound of their mirth. Sam made great projects for his children, and built for them castles in the air without end. Patrick was to get a grand education,—perhaps go to the bar, distinguish himself by his talents, and rise to the highest honours. “We’ll see you Chancellor yet !” the proud father would

cry, clapping his boy on the back, when the little fellow, who was sharp and ready of wit, had said something more flippant than usual.

Dan, according to Butler's plans, should keep the shop,—make money with wonderful success,—go to London, and in time become an alderman,—feast upon turtle, entertain princes, and perhaps end by being elected Lord Mayor! As for Nina, his beautiful little Nina, Butler had still wilder speculations for her.

But there was one thing which Butler had left out of all his calculations. He never remembered that “man proposes, but God disposes;” and that the blessing of the Almighty alone could make his children either prosperous or happy. He neglected to *train up his children in the way in which they should go*: or rather, he himself led his children in the way in which they should *not* go; and when old they did not depart *from it*.

Charles Hayes came to Butler one day, drawing along with him, by a firm grasp on the shoulder, the half-resisting, terrified Patrick, who, with lips blackened with cherries, and pockets dropping gooseberries, stood before his father the picture of a self-convicted thief.

“I am very sorry to say,” began Charles, “that I have found your boy in my garden, and, I fear, not for the first time. I thought it best to bring him at once to his father, that he may receive from you such a punishment as may make him a better and more honest boy.”

“Well,” said Butler, carelessly, “I’m sorry he has done mischief in your garden, neighbour; but it’s the nature of boys to love fruit. We must remember that we were children once.”

“It is not the fruit that I care for,” said Charles; “but it grieves me to see the sin. Every river was a brook once, every oak an acorn; and the boy who steals unheeded a

cherry from a tree, may end his days in prison as a thief!"

Sam chucked his boy under the chin, told him to mind what he had heard, and turned away with some jesting remark about the ease with which those who have no children of their own can manage the children of others.

"*He that spareth the rod hateth his son,*" thought Charles Hayes, as he slowly returned to his cottage.

Butler's shop was one in which a variety of cakes and sweetmeats were sold, and he invariably kept it open on Sundays. "I make more on that day than on any other day in the week," he used to say. "No one but a fool would beggar himself for the sake of idle scruples. I keep my conscience in my till!"

Butler's shop was, indeed, more full than usual on that day which we have been commanded to *keep holy*. And did he benefit by disobedience? He certainly thought that he did. His Nina dressed more gaily,

his own table was better supplied, his boys had more sports, he was enabled himself to drink deeper, than if, like his neighbour, he had devoted his Sabbaths to rest and religion. But was he really the better for his unhallowed gains?—were his wife or his children the better? Oh no! the example which he set, the company which he kept, were surely and not slowly corrupting and destroying the source of even his earthly happiness. We have read of a Spanish general who was so fond of money, that the enemies into whose hands he had fallen tortured and killed him by pouring melted gold down his throat, in mockery of his covetousness! So Satan now often makes money unlawfully acquired the very means of tormenting the miserable beings who have sold their consciences to obtain it. There is no blessing on it, no blessing can be expected with it; and it is not only at the judgment-day that ill-gotten wealth shall crush its owner beneath its weight!



The Wonderful Plate.

NOW many fancy that they are showing charity when they are only indulging pride ! How much of what is bestowed on the poor is not given from love of God, and cannot be acceptable in the sight of Him who readeth the heart !

Such was my last thought before retiring to rest, after attending a charitable meeting. The thought pursued me even in sleep, and I dreamed the following dream :—

Methought I stood at the door of a church, after a juvenile missionary sermon, with a plate in my hand, to receive the offerings of *the* youthful congregation. I fancied that

I was given power to read the *motives* of each child as he drew near to drop his money into the plate ; while the plate itself possessed a power more wonderful still,—that of changing the gift into what it was really worth in the sight of God.

The first who approached me was a smart-looking girl, the daughter of a thriving tradesman. None wore gayer ribbons, nor seemed more satisfied with herself, than Cecily Rose. She was a good-humoured, but light-headed child, one who never gave a serious thought to religion, nor cared for the wants of the heathen. She had a sixpence in her hand, taken from a well-filled purse, *because it is usual to drop something in the plate.* I glanced at her coin as she laid it down,—it had been changed to a *dull piece of lead !*

Then followed a sweet, gentle little child, with golden ringlets clustering beneath her straw hat. Nelly squeezed her mother's hand, and looked up into her mother's face,

as the little one put a small piece of money in the plate. I knew that Nelly gave it only *because she wished her mother to be pleased!* Where her little offering had been placed, I saw only *a rosy-tipped daisy!*

Peter Norton now approached towards me, holding out, so that any one might see it, a very bright new silver florin. It was a great deal for a young boy to give, and it was clear that Peter thought so. I am afraid that he had forgotten the Bible precept, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*, and that he gave so much to the good cause *because he wished the world to admire him!* I sighed when the florin touched the plate; the silver was changed in a moment to *a little bit of looking-glass*, bright, shining, but utterly worthless!

Then Andrew pushed forward almost rudely. He looked ill-naturedly at Peter Norton, as one who would say, "I'll do a handsomer thing than that! Give what *you like*, Master Peter, I won't be outdone

by you !” I felt inclined to draw back the missionary plate, that it might not be dishonoured by the half-crown flung into it by a boy full of pride, emulation, and spite ! I was startled indeed when I saw the change in the coin thus given to a holy cause from unholy motives. *A dead scorpion* was all that appeared of Andrew’s gift to the missionary plate !

My heart was growing very sad. “Alas !” thought I, “how much of sin mixes with even our best works. Those children who have just given their money doubtless think that they have done a good deed,—perhaps that they deserve a reward from God. Will no one bring a gift that will not turn into something worthless or vile !”

At the moment a pale little girl drew near. She had a very small offering to make ; only a penny was in her hand ; but to give that penny she had denied herself a cake which real hunger made doubly tempting. “A very little thing !” you will say ; but let

me ask you, my dear young readers, if you have yourselves ever tried a small act of self-denial like this. And why did Jenny Fayre give her penny? *Because she loved the Lord who had saved her*, and longed that poor heathen children should know Him, and love Him too.

I was glad to see the shy little hand quietly slip the money into the plate; I was rejoiced to think that one child at least had given money that would not be changed. But here I was entirely wrong. As I gazed at poor Jenny's penny, I could scarcely believe my eyes. Gradually it changed its dull hue, and grew brighter and brighter, till it was turned into burnished gold. The size, too, seemed to expand; the plate grew heavy beneath its weight; and on the large, splendid coin appeared a wreath, inclosing these words, in highly raised letters, YE DID IT UNTO ME. I gave an exclamation of pleasure, and with the surprise I awoke.


Beloved young readers, when next you *present* your alms, stop and ask yourselves

what are your *motives*, and whether your money, if dropped into my wonderful plate, would be changed, like poor Jenny's, to gold. Remember that nothing which we can do is of itself worthy the notice of God ; but as a parent dearly values the work of a fond and grateful child, however small it may be, so the Lord deigns to accept and a hundred-fold repay the humblest offering of love.





Through the Snow.

“H, mother, just look at pussy making her way through the snow, putting down her little paws so timidly, as if she were afraid of sinking in over head, shoulders and all !” exclaimed Maggie Maclaren, as she stood at her cottage window, looking out on the road, over which winter had spread a thick, deep covering of dazzling whiteness.

Mrs. Maclaren, who had just come in from a long, weary walk from the town, did not appear inclined to take any particular interest in the movements of pussy. It had been no easy matter for Maggie’s mother to trudge *for miles* through that snow, which in many

places lay more than ankle-deep in drifts. She had been heavily laden, and wearily the basket had hung on her arm, with the big parcels in it. She had carried three loaves, a pound of sugar, and half a pound of black tea ; Maggie's newly-heeled boots from the cobbler, warm socks and gloves for the little girl, and three yards of good gray linsey to make her a comfortable cloak. The mother had been all the morning working hard at the wash-tub, to earn money to buy all these things ; and the afternoon's long walk in the snow, with a cutting east wind in her face, had almost exhausted her strength. It would have been just as well if Maggie, instead of staring idly out of the window, had run to relieve her mother of that heavy basket, and if she had taken care to have a nice cup of tea ready to warm her after so chilling a walk. Maggie loved her mother dearly, but she was rather a thoughtless girl ; so she did not even help Mrs. Maclaren to pull off those boots, which were so wet through with

melted snow that she could scarcely drag them off.

“My feet are like ice,” cried Mrs. Mac-laren; “and no wonder, for my very stockings are as wet as if they had been in the wash-tub.”

“Poor little pussy! she has neither stockings nor boots,” laughed Maggie; “and these velvet paws of hers will be half frozen with cold! I wonder why she should go struggling on through the snow and wet, when she could have such a warm place by our fire, and a quiet nap on the old brown rug!”

“You forget that pussy has kittens in the loft of the stable opposite,” replied Mrs. Mac-laren. “She cares more, far more for them than she does for her own comfort.”

“Ah, pussy is a mother!” cried Maggie. “I wonder if those kittens will ever repay her for the trouble which they give her, and the love which she shows them!”

Mrs. Maclaren shook her head as she *replied*, “Pussy is like many a mother, who

must look for little return for all that she does for her children, but the comfort of knowing that they have never wanted for anything while she could labour—or suffer—for them.”

Maggie turned quickly round from the window ; the gentle reproach had struck on her heart. “ Oh, mother,” she cried, “ how thoughtless I have been ! ”

In a minute Maggie was down on her knees by her parent, chafing and rubbing those icy-cold feet, to bring back to them comfort and warmth. Then it was Maggie who ran for dry shoes, and her own warm little shawl to wrap round her mother’s shivering frame. Then the girl brought coals ; and filled the kettle, and set it upon the fire ; put the loaves on the shelf and the tea in the box, and emptied the sugar into its own brown jar without wasting a crumb. And while she was doing all this, Maggie was turning over in her mind whether she could not coax her mother to turn the good gray linsey into a skirt for herself.

I cannot say that Maggie, with all coaxing, succeeded in this ; but her mother looked as much pleased at her wish as if new skirt had been actually given to her. Maclaren. There was nothing that could warm the heart, she said, better than love of a dutiful child, whether in winter or summer. And never again had Mrs. Maclaren cause to think that Maggie could neglect her best earthly friend, or that she ever could forget what a deep debt of love is owed to a tender mother.





